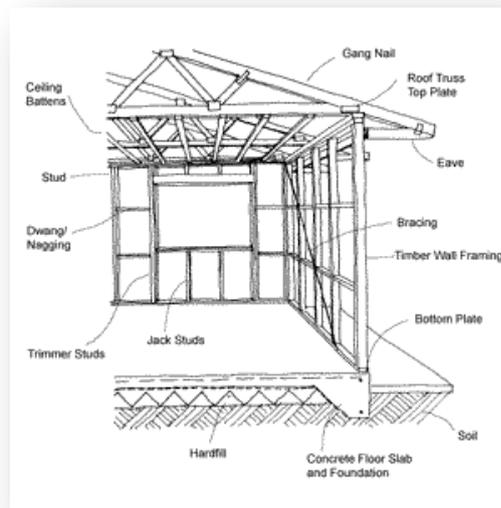


ARE YOU AN UNDISCOVERED INTERIOR DESIGNER?

PART 4

Construction, Fittings, Fixtures & Services

interiordezine.com



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Construction

While Interior Design and the creative flair are the fun parts that make the interior aesthetics work, you still need a basic knowledge of how buildings and the items inside them are held together. These are the nuts and bolts side of holding the interior that you design together.



As with most things we see around us, you need to have a foundation to work from and so it is with Interior Design. If you don't have the [basics in construction](#) and the language that the building industry uses then it is like a table without legs. A step or plinth rather than a table because the correct instruction hasn't got to the person who builds it.



The construction techniques and principles will also help you formulate practical ideas when designing. You can build or design almost anything, but some things are more practical and economical than others and different techniques and finishes can give the desired or similar effect without the cost being prohibitive. It is up to you to decide on the constraints if any and work from that.

The funny thing about construction is that it has just a few simple principles but numerous ways of achieving this, so it can be as simple or as complicated as you want to make it.

For example. There are a number of factors that should be considered when dealing with constructing something.

What is the item to do e.g. is it a Container? A Surface? Shelter? Support?

Therefore construction involves the following and a great deal more:

- The basic forces that are in play on objects such as buildings and joinery



Forces

- How building items are constructed such as, foundations, flooring, walls, ceilings and roofs.

Framed members and structures



- The composition of materials such as concrete, glass, fiberboards, timbers and how these apply to different situations and why.

Glass



- The trims applied inside a building relating in particular to an Interior Designer.

Wood



- The principles behind staircases and what makes them appropriate for different situations including basic rules for stair design.

Stairs



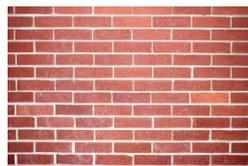
- What joinery is, including cabinetry and doors and windows.

Windows

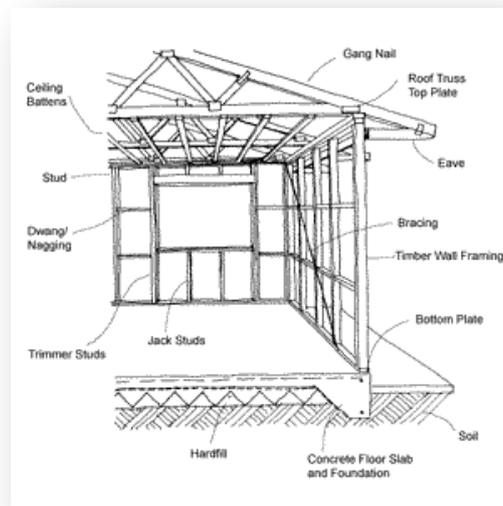
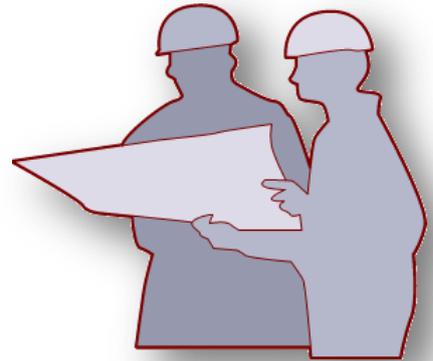


- Why moisture is the buildings enemy and how in particular this relates to interior design.

Wall construction



The above is a small part of the construction knowledge that helps make up a competent Interior Designer and although it can be daunting, a one step at a time method soon gets you underway to understanding construction and how this knowledge is applied to the design and drawing that a designer produces. If you don't know how it is built how can you expect others to be able to build it.



Basic Timber Framed House with a Concrete Floor Slab and Foundation

Materials and Finishes

Materials and finishes for walls, ceilings and floors.



This topic involves what materials to use and where. Be it paint, carpet or timber veneers interior designers all have a vast knowledge of the products that are available for the use in interiors. They know what to specify and where. It's a fundamental body of knowledge that every designer has and it has to be right because if it is specified into an inappropriate area and the product fails then the finger will be pointed at you as the designer to fix it.

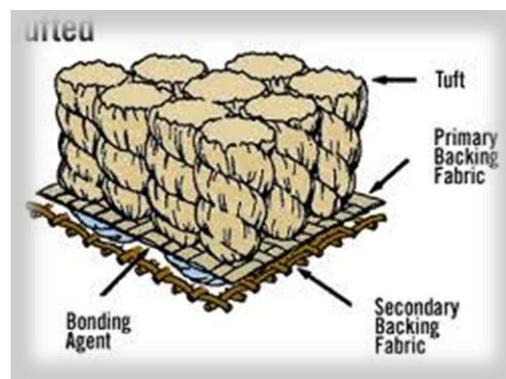
The Interior Designer builds an extensive knowledge of products that are traditional as well as new, knowing which to use, and where and when to use them.

For example, types of floor coverings. When specifying a floor, considerations that must be made are; what is available and what is appropriate for the particular situation, as well as being aesthetically pleasing. This will include the construction and wear factors so that you make an informed decision.

Carpet



Carpet is an important element in interior design and decoration. It is an expensive item to purchase and it generally covers a large area of the home flooring. So choosing the right carpet is imperative. Learn everything about carpet, ranging from the products or yarns used, the types of construction of carpet, the different names or carpet types and the underlay and types of installation available. There is also a section on appearance pitfalls – just a few things to consider when selecting carpets for a project, commercial or residential. You should be able to find all you need to know about carpets in the floor finishes section of the website, starting with how carpet is constructed.



How carpet is constructed

It is important to understand the two main methods of carpet construction as it is a large financial outlay for the client and they will have endless questions on why..... [Read More](#)



Timber



What is Wood or Timber?

Understanding basic information about timber and wood for interior design and decorating. We find out [what is wood and timber?](#)

What is Timber and Wood?

Which word to use? Timber or wood? I was taught that the easy way to remember was that you put wood on the fire to burn and keep you warm and you use timber to build things from. But I know that some people use the word wood for wooden blinds, wooden floors, wooden furniture. So perhaps my definition is incorrect. Here we will explain what wood and timber are.

There are over 6000 common names for various timbers worldwide and approximately 2000 in everyday use. These are made up of 60 species of Pine, 20 species of Oak, and 40-50 species of Mahogany.

We class timber as:

Indigenous – meaning native to a country.

Exotic – native to a country but grown in another and imported, a timber which is imported into a country in board form. [Much more....](#)

Timbers, the types and what they are used for.

Timber and Wood Boards used in Interior Decorating and Design

Find different types of wood boards definitions and their uses in home interior decorating and design.

Plywood

Plywood is stronger and more dimensionally stable than timber of the same thickness. That is because it is constructed by gluing an odd number of sheets of veneer with the grain of adjacent sheets at right angles to each other. This provides stiffness and reduces the amount of moisture movement in the timber. 3 Ply is the most economical and most readily available ply. In the US it was known as “veneered stock”. It comes in many grades, interior, moisture resistant.....[more](#)

Ceramics

Tiles and Clay Based Flooring Finishes

Brick and Brick Paviments

Bricks are made from clay, which is formed into shapes and dried in a kiln. Paviments are made in a similar fashion but they are thinner and often have special finishes on the surface. They are both hard-wearing and chemical resistant. They are laid on a bed of mortar.

Ceramic Tiles

Ceramic tiles are made from clay, pressed and tempered into the required shape and size and fired at high temperature. They are available in a vast range of colors; sizes and some have textural designs on the surface.....[more](#)



Wall Finishes - Paint



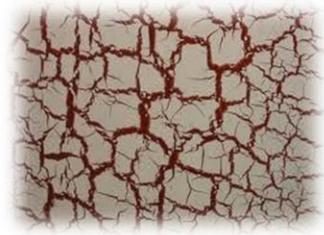
[Paint](#), what it is made of and where to use the different types?

Paints are thin coatings applied to surfaces in a liquid form. They dry and become flexible solids. They have many uses, the protection of the surface from sunlight, dampness, dust, abrasion, and weathering.

They provide easily cleanable surfaces that help keep the substrates clean and tidy. They can alter the interior by the use of color, light[learn more](#)

Paint Effects

Paint Effects, the different types of paint effect can be endless covering anything from sponging to graining and 3 dimensional effects. Types of paint effects for decorating home interiors are almost endless and applied correctly can save a great deal of money rather than using the real thing. Paint effects started thousands of years ago and there are examples marbling used in Rome as real marble to all the walls was cost prohibitive for some households.



Here is a brief definition of the different types of paint effects available to interior designers. They are useful tools for adding extra flair to an interior. Understanding what the different types of paint effects are allows you to be able to specify to your painter what type of look you want and because you know how to achieve that look you will also be able to specify the colors and process for it to be done.

Lacquering (Japanning)

Lacquering is the layering of numerous coats of varnish, sanding in between coats. This creates a smooth lustrous effect. The original technique came from Eastern cultures and the sap of the Lac tree was used. It is popular for use on furniture and can be used on walls.

Crackle-Glaze

Crackle-Glaze imitates old peeling paint and provides a cobweb look. The crackle glaze is applied between two water based coats of differing colors. This then produces a series of cracks on the top layer and exposes the base coat color underneath.....[more](#)

The finishes and materials available in today's interior design and decoration is extensive and to select the finishes or products requires vast knowledge and more importantly where to gain or access that knowledge. The internet is a huge help nowadays but the designer still needs to know what to look for amongst the design parameters set.



Try and count how many different materials are used in this picture

Selecting product, as discussed requires accessing the products performance capabilities. The following items should be considered:

- Economic and budgetary issues. Does the budget allow for the initial purchase cost of the material as well as the installation? Does the product require long-term maintenance, which may impact on the weekly household budget?
- Durability considerations. Will the product withstand daily wear and tear –water spillage, foot traffic, pets, and children with artistic flair, furniture movement? Is the product able to be easily maintained? Is it easily broken, or scratched, prone to changing temperatures?
- Safety issues. Is it slippery when wet (flooring)? Is it a fire hazard? Does it have hard or sharp edges? Does it provide a surface for glare? I.e. is it highly polished and reflective. Is the product dull and dark and impede vision without the lights on?
- Comfort and Aesthetic considerations. Does it look great? Does it fit in with your scheme, texturally, color wise, patterned items? Does it meet the acoustic and thermal insulation requirements of the local building authority? Do the tactile properties live up to the look? I.e. is it soft to touch, silky to run your fingers over, or cool underfoot?

Keeping all these items in mind, read on to have your interior finishes and product knowledge increased. A way to remember the product and its properties and functions is to consider where you would put each and why as you read along.

There are so many more varieties of these products becoming available on a daily basis, so it is important to keep up to date with what is available in the marketplace in your area. In our practice, we have sales representatives who call on us and keep us up to date with new products. If you are working for yourself or are simply tackling your own home then I'm sorry but you have to do the legwork and go and visit the stores and see what is available.

You will know the basic understanding of what you are looking for and all the criteria that the product must live up to. You can now enter a store and save time by ruling out all the materials that don't fit into what you want. If there is something that looks good and you don't know anything about it – ASK! That is the best way to keep learning and keep your materials and product knowledge up to date. Remember the sales people are there to sell to you, they also need to educate you to be able to understand their products and materials and how they could work in the environment that you are proposing them. You may find that they are not what you want, that doesn't matter as you have been through the exercise, have gained some new knowledge and in future you will know where to go to get that product. If you are just beginning, this whole process can be a little overwhelming.

Take a notebook and write down where you are, what products they have, what brands, note the service (if you receive good service that can save a lot of time later on when ordering product and following up etc), think about any jobs you have on, any products that may be suitable, or simply use this as your reference manual until you get fluent with where to go and who has what! You will find that you like some people to deal with rather than others, this is good as Interior Design and Decorating is about forming relationships, first with your client, then with your suppliers and contractors, to ensure you get a successful result.

To conclude, don't be afraid to ask questions, it is the only way to learn! Do you think doctors read the manual and jump in to treating patients without asking questions from those around them with more experience – NO, they take years even after graduating to be let loose on their own! So don't be shy.

Fittings, Fixtures and Services

The interior trim of a building is where the detail is. This area of design is part of the make or break input into the design. Here you find many skimp on the detail and what could have been a fabulous interior is reduced to a plain and mundane item. This topic is about specifying the correct fitting, choosing it by aesthetics as well as practicality and how the fitting works.

It is important to know what you are talking about when dealing with the client or with tradesmen. To speak with authority on this and make sure the fitting is correct is vital for the interior to work.

How often have you seen an item of hardware and not been able to describe it accurately to a sales person or product rep. For example with hardware an escutcheon plate, which is common in every building, is something we take for granted, but when it is not used it makes the item look unfinished and dreadful. An escutcheon plate is a simple (usually) metal surround that adds the finish to a hole in the door, ie key hole or other area that the bolt of a door bolt slides into. Maybe you knew this or didn't, however as an Interior Designer these simple items have to be chosen and specified.

Other areas that are part of the hardware of an interior are listed below, so use these links for a more comprehensive look at particular items and their uses. [Door locks](#) and [Hinges](#)



Door Hardware

You also have to know about the trims that finish an interior either for a modern or traditional look. These may include items such as:

- Skirtings, baseboards, cornices, architraves, dados, picture rails, pelmets. Their definitions and uses are found at the following link: [Wood moldings](#)
- Fixing Systems. How things are held together for example what fixings to use where such as the correct [screw](#) or bolt.
- [Electrical Fittings](#). The types and their uses in an interior.
- [Electricity](#). What it really is and what a designer should know about it.
- [Plumbing Fittings](#). The basics of a plumbing system, the fittings and what to use where.
- [Bathroom Fittings](#). The internal items required in the bathroom. Designers have to become quite personal with their clients and must be able to advise on everything in the interior.

An excerpt from interiordezine.com [bathrooms](#) and basins below:

Types of Basins. A [basin](#) may be set into joinery; wall hung or be self-set on a pedestal. The basin set into joinery may be recessed or semi recessed. All these types of installation have their practical uses and vary in size and cost. Other constraints or attributes that a designer should be aware of when specifying a basin are the type of tap and spout fitting to be used.

- Are they separate or integral?
- Is an over flow feature required?
- Is there space for soap, brushes, towels etc. or are they held elsewhere?

Never forget the color and the style (modern or traditional), as this is not only paramount to your scheme but also will hide or show dirt.

There are many sizes of basins and their use is of course the determining factor. The sizes displayed here should be remembered when planning. For example a basin inside the room in which the toilet is housed may only be required to wash hands and the room may be very small, so the size is very constrained. An average size may be only 250 mm deep and 450 mm wide.

The fittings within a home are endless and the client will rely upon your skill and professionalism to get the correct choices and advise on them

Summary

This was a selection of information about construction, fittings, fixtures and finishes – we hope that you now have some insight into the life of an interior designer. Please take advantage of the other ebooks and ecourses available.

This is Part 4 of “Are you an Undiscovered Interior Designer?”

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